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/11/ Chapter One

The Language

194 /Unnumbered note on Chapter One/ Regarding the pronunciation of the Lithuanian words appearing in the text the following should be noted: z equals soft S, S equals sharp s, c equals ts, č equals ch, ž equals j as in French jardin, š equals sh, ɣ equals tsh, e equals German open ä, ė equals German e.

104 The spelling of names in the text, consistently follows the official Lithuanian spelling: thus Suvalkija instead of Russian Suvalki, Garliava instead of Russian Godlevo. . .

Regarding the spelling of personal names it should be noted that originally non-Lithuanian names remain unchanged: thus Mickiewicz, Kraszewski, etc. On the

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7. K. Buga, "Die litauisch-weissrussischen Beziehungen und ihr Alter," special number of the Zeitschrift für slawische Philologie (Leipzig, 1924), Vol. I, Nos. 1/2, pp. 26-55. Būga points out that a series of White Russian words of religious content must have found its way into the Lithuanian language even before 1387 (pp. 50 and 52). The same would apply to the terms for a number of objects with which the Lithuanians became acquainted through the trade with the White Russians even before 1200; e.g. glass, silk, market, donkey, radish, and others (p. 46).

quently looked upon as Slavic is of proto-Indo-European origin and thus equally at home in both languages. Finally, Lithuanian contains many words that passed over into the Slavic languages. A comparison of the Lithuanian language with the Slavic languages presents thus a great number of factors that have to be taken into consideration.

197 All in all we can say today that the relationship of these languages on closer observation does not prove to be as close as it appeared to [194] Schleicher. Above all, there is a strikingly small number of sibilants in Lithuanian, while the sibilants actually impose a special stamp on Slavic. [193] On the other hand, Slavic feeling for language is reflected to a large extent in the syntax and grammar of Lithuanian. Thus the Lithuanian language, exactly as Polish, puts the predicate substantive in the instrumental and puts the object in the genitive with negative verbs. Certain sibilants, e.g. the č in mačiau "I saw," are traceable for the first time around the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but do not represent a borrowing from Slavic. It is interesting that the educated Russian and Pole will not admit any close relationship of Lithuanian with his own language and that, quite the contrary, he is inclined to look at the Lithuanian language as something com-

1 [Footnote to text on page 12, see cat. 192 or 197--Analyst] purely foreign.

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genitive follows, precisely because it expresses the differentia specifica, that which is later and comes after.

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If from the form of the language we turn briefly to the character of the sounds, we find, as a very ancient phenomenon, a peculiar, swaying rhythm. As early as the middle of the last century this was for Leopold Arends, the inventor of stenography, /22/ his reason for working with the problem of speech modulation, i.e. with the so-called singing character of speech. It belongs to the features of the Lithuanian language that are incomprehensible for the foreigner who cannot learn it. In order, therefore, to give at least some idea of its nature, I quote from Vydūnas: "The Lithuanian language has a completely individual and for the present a unique character in regard to rhythm. It moves under tension from two parallel rhythms that work against each other simultaneously. The basic rhythm is that of the alternation of long and short sounds or syllables. In addition there is the alternation between higher and lower tones. And often the high tone falls on the short vowel in opposition to the force of the long, full sound; e.g. in individual words: sūnùs "son," ùpė̃ "river." The tone wanders, however, in the various cases of most inflected words from one syllable to another . . .But the rhythm of tone has only a secondary significance. . .The language rather moves forward swaying like a song. For that reason, too, the richness of forms has been preserved until now. A very strong accent, particularly if it had become fixed in any special place, would probably have resulted in the wearing off of endings." (17)

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17. W. St. Vydūnas, Litauen in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart (Tilsit, 1916), pp. 87-88.

Present-day linguistics points out that in

197 Present-day linguistics points out that in
194 the Lithuanian language the intonation of the primitive Indo-European language has still been preserved. This can be seen with particular clarity in a comparison with Greek: e.g. Lithuanian algà (from algā̃); Greek ἀλφή "profit"; but genitive algõs, Greek ἀλφῆς .

Let it be said that here, too, there are variations in Lithuanian, in that some dialects have obliterated the length distinctions and have thus become simpler with regard to rhythm and melody (e.g. Samogitian). Where, however, the old rhythm has remained fully preserved, it has kept the endings from wearing away and degenerating, as we find them for example in /23/ Lettish, where the words are always stressed on the first syllable. Certainly the melody of the Lithuanian language, which many linguists have noticed, rests in large part upon this peculiar swaying rhythm.

194 The beauty and melody of the Lithuanian language unfolds its full euphony particularly in song. It has been appreciated by many scholars and artists. Thus by Élisée Reclus: "If the value of a nation in the whole of humanity could be measured by the beauty of its language, the Samogitians and Lithuanians would be in the first rank among the inhabitants of Europe." (18)

[113] 18. Élisée Reclus, Nouvelle Geographie Universelle, Vol. V, (Paris, 1880), p. 431.

We have found one reason for the phonetic beauty of this language in the minor role of the sibilants, in which it is distinguished from the Slavic languages, a second reason in the musical rhythm peculiar to it which gives it a swaying movement. Finally, a third reason is its richness in pure vowels. They are primarily the vowels a, o, and u, while compressed vowels like the Russian ы are not present at all. We are indebted to Vydūnas for interesting statistics on

194 the vowels. He investigated the type and frequency of the vowels in Lithuanian and German and found the following relationship: (19)

19. W. St. Vydūnas, see above p. 88.

a,	Lithuanian	5,	German	2
o	"	3	"	2
u	"	3	"	2
e	"	1	"	3
i	"	2	"	1

While in German the vowels a, o, and u are distributed equally, they predominate strongly in Lithuanian and give the language a different phonetic character. On the other hand, the e, which in German predominates, falls far into the background in Lithuanian. All in all, 14 Lithuanian vowels correspond to 10 German ones. Since the phonetic value of the individual vowels is different, we have here perhaps also one of the reasons why the Lithuanian language seems so dark in song.

195 /24/ C. The Development of the Lithuanian Literary Language

We can trace the development of the Lithuanian literary language back to Duonelaitis (cf. Chapter Five)†, although Lithuanian writings were printed before him. In 1735 even the Bible appeared in the Lithuanian language at the behest of the Königsberg General Superintendent Quant. The first Lithuanian Bible translation was written by Bretkunas between 1579 and 1590, but this work lies unprinted to this day in the university library at Königsberg. The language of the printed Lithuanian Bible does not breathe the spirit of the Lithuanian language like the Luther Bible that of the German. Always it is only the poet who is the creator of language. And Luther was also a poet. Moreover, the Lithuanian Bible translation is full

† [cat. 116, pp. 199-205-- Analyst]